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ABSTRACT

This 53-item annotated bibliography reviews the research on the value of reading aloud to students, the benefits of incorporating literature into the classroom, effective behaviors of parents and teachers, and creative ways of incorporating these techniques to create better and more interested readers. This bibliography was designed to be informative to teachers, parents, and administrators who are interested in improving the reading achievement and attitudes of children. The material in this bibliography dates from 1968 to 1987 and includes journal articles, documents in the ERIC database, and resource books. A summary, conclusions, and five specific recommendations based on the works cited are presented. The conclusion states that research indicates that reading aloud is a valuable activity both in terms of instructional value and in developing positive reading attitudes. (RS)

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READING ALOUD TO OTHERS: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ITS VALUE AND EFFECTIVENESS IN THE CLASSROOM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	3
Organization of the Study	3
Limitations of the Study	4
Glossary	4
Annotations	6
Instructional Value of Reading Aloud	6
Home and School Factors	12
The Teacher's Role	14
Students' Responses to Reading Aloud	18
Activities and Programs Using Reading Aloud	23
Resource Books	27
Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations	28
Summary	28
Conclusion	34
Recommendations	36
Works Cited	37
Background	41

Reading Aloud to Others: Factors Contributing to Its Value and Effectiveness in the Classroom

You may have tangible wealth untold:
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.
Richer than I you can never be--
I had a mother who read to me.

--"The Reading Mother" by Strickland Gillilan, from Best Loved Poems of the American People.

If the person in the poem could also say, "I had a teacher who read to me," he/she would have had the best of both worlds. The value of reading aloud has long been supported on empirical evidence, but with the time constraints on teachers with the back-to-basics movement, reading aloud often gets pushed aside in today's classrooms for more measureable achievement activities. The report by The National Commission of Reading states, "There is no substitute for the teacher who reads children good stories"(Anderson et al. 51). Reading aloud has been promoted and enjoyed by parents and teachers alike as a worthwhile activity, yet it is an activity that is often left to chance, when there is a "free" moment, or as a "filler" at the end of the day. The days are filled with the skills and drills of reading, leaving little time for the enjoyable. If, however, reading aloud could be proven to be an activity that is not only enjoyable but also an effective teaching method, it would gain its rightful place in the classroom curriculum. Perhaps it is a lack of knowledge about the value of reading aloud that needs to be addressed. This paper will seek to present research that will answer the question posed by Butler (882), "Can the

pleasurable be measureable?

Reading aloud not only produces a growth in language development and vocabulary and comprehension, but in the attitudes of children toward reading as teachers and parents present literature in ways that promote life-long reading. McCormick (143) states, "Research now provides evidence of the direct relationship between reading aloud to children and reading performance, language development, and development of reading interests." Once the academic value of reading aloud is clarified, teachers need to know how their behaviors as role models can affect their students. Teachers themselves need to be enthusiastic and interested.

This paper is an annotated bibliography that will review research on the value of reading aloud by incorporating literature in the classroom, the parent and teacher behaviors that have proven to be effective, and creative ways of using this information to create better and more interested readers.

This bibliography was designed to be informative to teachers, parents, and administrators who are interested in improving the reading achievement and attitudes of children in order for them to become life-long readers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Reading aloud has always been a part of classroom instruction, but is has been neglected in recent years because of time constraints placed in the curriculum through accountability, competency testing, and back-to-basic movement.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to show that the time spent reading to children in the home and classroom can be justified because of the increased measureable achievement growth as well as increasing the child's interest in learning to read.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study will first establish the value of reading aloud to children through research and observation. The need for enriching basal reading programs will be briefly addressed. Research analyzing teacher and student behaviors will be presented. Finally, some effective programs that have been tested in the classroom will be presented for their value in promoting a read aloud program.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is designed to relate specifically to classroom reading instruction that would create not only better readers, but readers that want to read. For the most part, studies relating to parent behaviors have not been included unless it relates to the classroom or is associated with teacher behavior. It does not cover all related literature, but the conclusions made are believed to be consistent with other studies on this subject.

GLOSSARY

alliterate--a person who can read, but does not (Stahlschmidt and Johnson 1984: 146).

basal reader program--a sequential, systematic program using a series of basic reading texts and related materials (Good 1973: 442).

children's literature--consists of books that are not only read and enjoyed, but also that have been written for children and that meet high literary and artistic standards (Sutherland 1981: 6).

illiterate--the inability to read and write sufficiently well to meet the needs of adult life (Good 1973: 291).

language development--developing the ability to communicate with others through the written and spoken word (Bellon 1975: 149).

literate--ability to read and write at the level of the average fourth grade pupil (Good 1973: 342).

oral reading--for the purpose of this paper, the act of reading aloud by the teacher or other person to student(s).

reading aloud--the act of reading orally by the teacher or other person to student(s).

reading comprehension--the act of understanding the meaning of written language (Page and Thomas 1977: 79).

reluctant reader--a child who is a capable learner and reader but who is not inclined to read (Good 1973: 472).

trade book--a book published for the purpose of giving the reader pleasure and of feeding his interest for pleasure (Good 1973: 68).

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Instructional Value of Reading Aloud

Koeller, Shirley. "Twenty-five Years Advocating Children's Literature in the Reading Program." The Reading Teacher 34 (1981): 552-556.

Koeller reviewed and analyzed twenty-five years of The Reading Teacher, noting that using children's literature in the elementary reading program had been a recurring theme. Regardless of how research had proven this to be the best way to build enthusiasm for reading, most classrooms continued to use the basal readers as the basis for teaching reading. It had been suggested that instead of relying on a single text, educators should have been concerned with habits, not skills. "These is a positive relationship between the number of books a student reads and that person's reading comprehension and attitude" (555). This article stated that more teachers should read aloud in all grades, with enough "good" books to tempt children to read on their own.

Eldredge, J. Lloyd and Dennis Butterfield. "Sacred Cows Make Good Hamburger: A Report on a Reading Research Project Titled "Testing the Sacred Cows in Reading.'" ERIC (1984): ED 255 861.

This study was a report on a reading research project with conclusions that applied to a read aloud program. They found that educators often overemphasized the teaching of skills with the poor readers. In turn, these students were not able to apply these skills in recreational and functional reading. They rarely read what was meaningful. The reading program found to be the most successful involved comprehension activities that developed vocabulary and thinking skills that were developed through "a) materials read orally to children, b) sharing of books sessions, c) content area reading" (81). The bulk of the reading period should be spent in activities to stimulate children's interest in reading books, reading to children, and children reading. It was recommended that the teacher should read one book on a continuous basis to children each day until the book was completed, and also a short book that could be completed in one sitting each day. Following the read aloud session, the book should be made available to them to read by themselves.

Eldredge, J. Lloyd and Dennie Butterfield. "Alternatives to Traditional Reading Instruction." The Reading Teacher 40 (1986): 32-37.

The researchers for this article studied five experimental approaches to reading instruction to determine if they would be more effective than the traditional reading approach. The findings of this study indicated that using children's literature to teach reading had a positive effect upon students' achievement and attitudes. Of twenty significant differences determined by comparing the five programs, fourteen were in favor of the literature program. Not only were the students' achievement scores higher, but their attitudes toward reading improved. The attitudes of students using basal readers decreased during this same time period. The author suggested that children who enjoy reading will actually read more, which will result in reading achievement gains.

Russavage, Patricia M., Larry L. Lorton, and Rhodessa L. Millham. "Making Responsible Instructional Decisions about Reading: What Teachers Think and Do about Basals." The Reading Teacher 39 (1985): 314-317.

In order to determine whether teachers wereaware of the good and bad sides of the basal materials they were using to teach reading, twenty-five teachers of grades one to five in three elementary rural public schools were asked to respond to a questionnaire. They were to identify specific strengths and weaknesses of the basal reader program, and ways in which they departed from its planned program. They identified several strengths and weaknesses, and indicated that they modified or enhanced the commercial materials in several ways, including the use of other literature for enrichment and variety. The researchers found this to be promising since the teachers were making instructional decisions that perceived reading as meaning.

Anderson, R. C., E. H. Heibert, J. A. Scott, and I. A. Wilkinson. Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading (1985). Washington, D. C., The National Institute of Education.

This report was written by leading experts in the study of reading and reading instruction, and presented their interpretations of current knowledge and research about the process of reading and the practice of teaching reading. The Commission was established by the National Academy of Education to "locate topics on which there has been appreciable research and scholarship...and to survey, interpret, and synthesize research findings" (viii).

Chomsky, Carol. "Stages in Language Development and Reading Exposure." Harvard Educational Review 42 (1972): 1-33.

This often-quoted research forms the basis for the justification for reading aloud. It examined the relationship between children's exposure to language and their rates of linguistic development. Chomsky found a strong correlation between the number of reading exposures and the child's language development. She studied the language acquisition of children between the ages of six and ten, noting the differences between adult grammar and child grammar. These differences gradually were reduced as the child became more knowledgeable of the syntax of his language. Although the ages of the children varied when they acquired the language structure, she found a developmental sequence of linguistic stages each child must go through. By studying the child's rate of linguistic development when exposed to the written language through independent reading and listening to books read aloud, she confirmed that language was not taught, but learned naturally as one was exposed to it. The educational significance of this study was that more learning was possible by exposing children to a "rich variety of language inputs in interesting and stimulating situations" (33).

Cohen, Dorothy H. "The Effect of Literature on Vocabulary and Reading Achievement." Elementary English 45 (1968): 209-213, 217.

In this study by Cohen, reading literature aloud was chosen as the behavior to solve the problem of poor motivation and inadequate readiness. Books were chosen to be read that would lead children to a realization of the pleasure to be gained from books, and also would increase their vocabulary. Two hundred eighty-five second-graders were studied. The teachers for the experimental group were to read aloud each day with a suitable follow-up activity. The control groups used stories as an occasional treat. The results showed a significant increase in both vocabulary and comprehension that was especially vital for socially disadvantaged children. It was concluded that vocabulary learned by slower children was best learned "in a context of emotional and intellectual meaning" (213), and confirmed that there is a relationship between oral language and reading.

Feitelson, Dina, Bracha Kia, and Zahava Goldstein. "Effects of Listening to Series Stories on First Graders Comprehension and Use of Language." Research in the Teaching of English 20 (1986): 339-356.

This study took place in Israel with disadvantaged first graders. These children had rarely been read to. At home, watching videos was "much less trouble and more modern," as one mother put it. In school, the teachers normally did not read to their children because of time constraints. Pretest and posttest measures were used. Experimental and control classes were chosen that included five classrooms and one hundred thirty-nine children. (This later decreased to three classrooms and eighty-eight children as two teachers could not find the time to read aloud.) Children were read to for the last twenty minutes of the school day for six months. A series story, Kafiko, was chosen for its appeal to young audiences. The control group continued their usual learning activities. Children who had been read to outscored children in the control classes on measures of decoding, reading comprehension, and active use of language. Children in the experimental group enjoyed the books so much that by the end of the experiment, forty-five books were owned and read by the children, whereas in the two control classes, seven books were owned and those children had not read them.

Hoober, Rosalind, and Victoria Chou Hare. "Measureable Effects of a Read Aloud Program." Reading Horizons 22 (1982): 253-257.

In order to comprehend reading material, the student must bring his/her prior knowledge to bear on the subject. This statement formed the basis for this study. The purpose of this study was to see if reading aloud extended student experiences and backgrounds, and also their use of appropriate language. Participating in the study were twenty-six inner city first graders who had never seen or read about a circus. The experimental group was read material about circuses twice a week for eight weeks. Following treatment, the read aloud group had significantly ($p<.001$) increased their knowledge of the circus as judged by analyzing their drawings, stories, and language used. The author hypothesized that reading aloud in subject areas would be very useful to children while they were still mastering basic reading skills.

Porter, Edith Jane. "The Effect of a Program of Reading Aloud to Middle Grade Children in the Inner City." PH.D. Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1969.

Middle grade students were studied to determine if their reading abilities and interests would increase by a program of oral reading, followed by discussion and related activities. Interested high school students were assigned to read aloud to one thousand two hundred two children in forty-two classrooms. The program included fourth, fifth, and sixth graders who were read aloud to two times a week for twenty weeks. The pretest and posttest, and experimental and control group designs were used. By analyzing the data, the total experimental group differed significantly from the total control group in reading achievement with posttest in vocabulary, comprehension, and total reading at the .0005 level. The fourth grade had greater significant differences between groups than the fifth and sixth grades. Differences in scores between groups were higher for boys than girls. Porter concluded that teachers should see the importance of providing time for reading aloud, especially in the inner-city schools. Since fourth graders made greater gains than fifth and sixth graders, it could be implied that there should be a greater emphasis on reading aloud at lower grade levels where skills and habits were being formed.

Cullinan, Bernice E., Angela M. Jaggar, and Dorothy Strickland. "Language Expansion for Black Children in the Primary Grades: A Research Report." Young Children 29 (1974): 98-112.

This research was designed to determine the effects of a literature based oral language program on black children's ability to become familiar with and to learn standard English. The thesis was that black children were disadvantaged when learning standard language as they come to school with a different language structure. The experimental group was read aloud to daily and completed a related activity. The control groups were also read the book but did not complete the active oral language activity. Kindergarten through third grade students were studied with the experimental and control groups in separate schools to avoid imitation. A significant difference between the control and experimental treatments was found only at the kindergarten level. Black children did learn standard English as they progressed through the grades. However, it was concluded that the reading program was helpful because of timing. It was helpful in that children were not learning to read at the same time as they were learning standard English.

Fearn, Leif. "The Oral Model As a Strategy in Developmental Reading Instruction." The Reading Teacher 25 (1971): 205.

Fearn used one hundred twelve fourth graders in two middle class urban schools as the subjects for his study. The experimental and control design was used. For twelve weeks, the experimental groups heard taped readings of stories whereas the control groups did not. He reported that although the experimental groups showed improvement in comprehension and total reading on a whole class basis, the treatment was most effective on children at the lower extremes of reading achievement and least effective on children at the upper extremes of reading achievement.

Fasick, Adele Mongan. "Television Language and Book Language." Elementary English 50 (1973): 125-130.

Fasick compared the language of children's books and the content of children's television programs to determine their usefulness as language developers. She found by studying sentence structure that storybook sentences are predominately (66 percent) complex structures, while television sentences are predominately (64 percent) simple in structure. By measuring the amount of subordination in each complex sentence, a measure of the difference between storybook and television language can be indicated. The average rating for combined storybooks was thirty-eight, and was considerably higher than the twenty-nine rating for combined television shows. The twenty-nine rating was the same as that determined for fifth graders language. The author cited two other factors that would contribute to the effectiveness of reading aloud over television. These were the opportunity to repeat parts of the story and the social interaction between reader and child.

Bellon, Elner C. "Language Development through Storytelling Activities." School Media Quarterly 3 (1975): 149-156.

Bellon explored how storytelling and reading aloud can be defended as a language development activity. He cited various research studies that show that language activities involve the child so that all aspects of language affect him. "Language is a tool that the child uses in his thinking as he learns to communicate" (151). Bellon identified how a literature program contributed to language development through colorful words, variety of sentence types, a chance to use language in discussion or drama, to check information, to personalize literature, and communications. In other words, the children become "active users of language" (151). The remainder of the article explained storytelling techniques.

Briechle, Claire. "Reading to Children and Achievement." Kean College of New Jersey, ERIC (1984): ED 243 098

Briechle designed this study to determine whether a teacher's oral reading to sixth grade students on a regular basis would have a significant positive effect on their comprehension. The study included twenty upper middle class students, with the experimental group being read to for twenty-five minutes three times a week, while the control group worked on other reading activities monitored by a volunteer in another room. The pre and posttest method was used. The results indicated a significant ($p<.01$) difference between the comprehension scores of the two groups, with the read aloud group having the highest scores. The author suggested studying the effects over a longer period of time, and also studying older children in the same way.

McCormick, Sandra. "Should You Read Aloud To Your Children?" Language Arts 54 (1977): 139-143,163.

McCormick reviewed the research which related how children benefited from experiences they had in being read to. These experiences resulted in better reading performance, reading interest, and language development. The study noted that better results were obtained when children were read to over longer periods of time than a short term period. Other studies showed that children from lower socioeconomic status received greater benefit. The study also concluded that children from the lower ranges of reading achievement made the most significant increases in language growth. After noting the results of many studies, McCormick concluded that reading aloud was more than a pleasant pastime. Since research provided a direct relationship between reading aloud and reading success, reading aloud was an activity that should take place regularly (143).

Butler, Cynthia. "When the Pleasurable Is Measureable Teachers Reading Aloud." Language Arts 57 (1980: 882-885.

Butler reviewed research dealing with reading aloud and the way both teachers and students enjoyed this activity. In addition, she cited research to confirm it was "not only a means of introducing students to good literature; it is tool for growth in specific reading areas" (882). She concluded her article with specific suggestions about what to read and how to read it.

HOME AND SCHOOL FACTORS

Morrow, Lesley Mandel. "Home and School Correlates of Early Interest in Literature." Journal of Educational Research 76 (1983): 221-230.

Morrow studied twenty-one kindergarten classrooms to determine why children had a low or high interest in literature. Questionnaires to the parents were used to obtain information about children's television viewing habits, the availability of books in the home, the parents' reading habits, and whether they read aloud to their children. It was found that children with a high interest in literature were read to more often, watched less television, and had more books placed around the home. According to results from this study, teachers needed support from the home to succeed in stimulating voluntary reading. However, it would appear that the teacher behaviors were also significant. Eighty-one percent of the high-interest children came from classrooms where literature programs were rated as good or excellent and teachers had regularly planned literature activities and well-designed library corners. Eighty-two percent of the low interest children came from classrooms where literature programs were rated fair or poor (227).

Lockledge, Ann and Constance Matheny. "Looking Toward the Family: Case Studies of Lifelong Readers." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association, 32nd, Anaheim, CA, 1987. ED 283 140.

Interviews of over two hundred adult readers and "not-readers" were conducted to determine what influenced them to read or not to read. The results indicated that parents who enjoyed and valued reading produced children who enjoyed and valued reading. These families tended to be warm, loving, and close. The "not-readers" remembered that their families did other things such as sports or chores. They also tended to remember school as a place "to be endured until recess" (7). However, there were adults who remembered very limited literary experiences with their families and yet they became "voracious" readers. These exceptions invariably could be attributed to a teacher who "got them to read" (1). It seemed that when family influences toward literature were not strong, the school could become an important influence and shaper of values. The authors concluded that this may be a way for teachers and schools to extend the school's influence.

THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Morrow, Lesley Mandel. "Field-based Research on Voluntary Reading: A Process for Teachers' Learning and Change." The Reading Teacher 39 (1985): 331-337.

This study was originally designed to determine if children's behavior and attitudes toward voluntary reading could be changed by a program of regular literature activities and use of well-designed classroom library corners. Children's selection of the literature center during free-time increased significantly in the experimental groups as teachers regularly read aloud, discussed stories, told stories, used literature in content area lessons, and so on. However, a side benefit of this study proved to be a change in teacher attitudes and classroom practices. After seeing the results, the teachers who had felt there was little room for a library center or little time for a regular literature program prior to the program, reported that they planned to continue the literary activities. They planned to integrate literary activities as part of their reading program and not just as an extra when they found time. Even the control group wanted a library corner and were integrating literary activities in their program on a regular basis.

Hall, Maryanne. "Literature Experiences Provided by Cooperating Teachers." The Reading Teacher 24 (1971): 425-431, 463, 471.

The purpose of this survey was to determine the extent and types of experience with children's literature with a group of cooperating teachers. Other literary activities were studied; however, only reading aloud to children will be included here. In over half of the classes, the teacher did not read to children daily, nor was there a regularly scheduled time for reading to children. In sixty-one percent of the classes, the teacher read to the children only if there were free time in the school day. In seventy-six percent of the classes the selections read aloud did not reflect a planned literature program. The author felt that teachers need to include a planned literature program. "Developing a permanent interest in reading cannot be left to chance" (463).

Stahlschmidt, Agnes D. and Carole Schulte Johnson. "The Library Media Specialist and the Read Aloud Program." School Library Media Quarterly 12 (1984): 146-149.

This study based on research was designed to inform teachers and administrators about the educational outcomes of a read aloud program. The authors noted that the back-to-basics movement has overshadowed research regarding the value of the practice of reading aloud. Teachers of kindergarten through sixth grade were asked to respond to a survey regarding reading aloud to their classes. Of the one hundred thirteen respondents, over ninety-six percent of the teachers reported that they did read aloud, and ninety-three percent said they read daily or two-three times a week. One hundred percent said they used the library media center to obtain books for reading aloud, which pointed to the importance of a good library media center. High interest was the number one reason for selecting books to be read aloud.

Searls, Evelyn F. "Do You, Like These Teachers, Value Reading?" Reading Horizons 25 (1985): 233-238.

Searls decided to study whether teachers valued reading. Earlier studies had concluded that reading was being taught for the most part by teachers who themselves were not reading enthusiasts. She had students in her graduate class give a questionnaire to their fellow teachers in order to see if the previous studies held any validity. The results were much more positive. Ninety-five percent indicated that they read for pleasure, and eighty percent had read a novel in the last year. She felt encouraged by these results, but suggested that the person reading this article draw his/her own conclusions, but more importantly, analyze his/her own habits and attitudes about reading to determine how he/she can best develop life-long readers in his/her own classroom.

Perez, Samuel A. "Children See, Children Do: Teachers as Reading Models." The Reading Teacher 40 (1986): 8-11.

The purpose of this work was to make teachers aware that they must provide a role model as a person who loves reading if he/she expects children to develop a love of reading. The teacher has been found to be the single most influential person in the development of children's response to books (10). A great way to model this enthusiasm was to read aloud to children every day. This showed the student that reading was something the teacher valued and enjoyed and the student learned to associate reading with pleasure. To motivate children to become life-long readers, modelling a love of reading was more effective than preaching about the joys of reading.

Lamme, Linda Leonard. "Reading Aloud to Young Children." Language Arts 53 (1976): 886-888.

Lamme observed sixty-three primary teachers in order to create a more objective way to determine the quality of the teacher's oral reading to groups of children. The teachers were videotaped and rated on various items concerning their effectiveness in reading aloud. The highest ranking factor was involving the children in the story by having the children predict what would happen next, to fill in words, or to chorus the refrains. Eye contact, expression, and quality of the reader's voice were ranked next in that order. Other behaviors had to do with the way the book was presented by pointing out the pictures, grouping children so all could see, and the selection of the book. The conclusion was made that children's attitudes toward literature were influenced by the ways in which adults read to them.

Teale, William H. and Miriam Martinez. "Teachers Reading to Their Students: Different Styles, Different Effects?" Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwest Regional Conference of the International Reading Association (14th, San Antonio, TX, ERIC, 1986) ED 269 754.

The authors surveyed leading literature on reading to children and identified the eight most common recommendations. They then observed two kindergarten teachers as they read to their children, and found that these recommendations did not distinguish between their reading. A deeper analysis indicated differences in the amount of talk, discussion, and questioning. One teacher concentrated mainly on the moral of the story and the other on thinking skills. The results of this research suggested that it was important for teachers to realize what they were doing when they read to children. "It may well be that the way a teacher reads a book will directly affect the children's understanding of and response to the story" (8).

Roser, Nancy and Miriam Martinez. "Roles Adults Play in Preschoolers' Response to Literature." Language Arts 62 (1985): 485-490.

Four and five year olds were audiotaped in both a school setting and a home setting. They listened to a total of ten stories read three times by the teacher, and four different parents in a home setting for a total of ten months. As might have been expected, the researchers noted different responses between home and school, as those in school were asked more questions. However, in either setting, the children tended to respond to the literature in the same way the adult did. For example, if the adult commented on the illustrations, the child tended to respond to the illustrations more; if the adult said little about the story, the child tended to say little. This observation could be useful to teachers. "The value of an adult partner who shares books and who thinks aloud in response to literature cannot be ignored" (489).

Gerth, Mary E. "How Story Time Can Promote Comprehension." Learning 11 (1983): 94.

Gerth suggested that story time could go a long way toward promoting reading comprehension or it could actually inhibit the development of good comprehension skills. "If children are allowed to be merely passive listeners who can tune out at will, they will develop habits of inattention that will be hard to break." In order to keep students' attention, the secret was interaction. He suggested that children must participate in the story by active listening and response that involved them in meanings and new ideas. The teacher should preview the book to help children learn to predict what will happen. He/she should ask about the picture or leave out a word. Rereading a particularly interesting phrase was found to help them learn to appreciate words. The child could dramatize a new descriptive word. The author included other ideas to make story time an actual learning situation.

STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO READING ALOUD

Mendoza, Alicia. "Reading to Children: Their Preferences." The Reading Teacher 38 (1985): 522-527.

This article was based on a survey done by twenty-five graduate students in a children's literature class. They designed a survey of school children's preferences when being read to by others. The graduate students used it with their respective kindergarten to sixth grade classes. The questionnaire focused on 1) size of groups, 2) home reading environments, 3) what they wanted to know about a book before it was read to them, 4) the best thing about having someone read books aloud, and other related questions. When asked if they liked being read to, an overwhelming majority of both primary (94%) and intermediate (74%) students answered in the affirmative.

Artley, A. Sterl. "Good Teachers of Reading--Who Are They?" The Reading Teacher 31 (1978): 26-31.

Artley conducted a survey involving approximately one hundred junior and senior education majors. The purpose of the survey was to see what they could remember that their teachers did that promoted their interest and competence in reading. The greatest number of students replied that reading aloud to the class or group by their teacher was what they enjoyed the most. The students indicated that this was done on all levels, not merely in the elementary grades. Some reported that the teacher would read to an interesting point, and then make the book available for them to finish themselves. Other teachers read a book chapter by chapter from a book that was above their reading level, but on their interest level. Others remembered teachers talking about a book they would enjoy, or tell about a book he/she was reading. Knowing that books and reading was important to the teacher sparked their interest in reading for themselves.

Bruckerhoff, Charles. "What Do Students Say About Reading Instruction?" Clearing House 51 (1977): 104-107.

This study was conducted to determine what influences helped children develop good and bad feelings about reading. One hundred ninety-one high school students were asked to respond in writing to these questions: 1) What did teachers do to promote an interest in reading? 2) What did teachers do to destroy good feelings about reading? 3) What influences outside of school promoted an interest in reading? The behavior that promoted positive attitudes most was being read to aloud. Book reports were the most often cited as negative influences on reading, and the home had the most influence outside of school.

Mason, G. and W. Blanton. "Story Content for Beginning Reading Instruction." Elementary English 48 (1971): 793-796.

A sampling of one hundred eight, three, four, and five year olds were interviewed and asked a) if they liked stories read to them, b) what stories do they like to hear best, and c) what stories would they read if they could read all by themselves. Hearing stories read aloud was obviously an activity most preschoolers enjoyed as all but nine responded "yes". A great majority could name a story that they preferred. They chose the same story whether it would be read to them or read by them. The researchers found that once these children learned to read for themselves, they were more eager to read the same books or the same types of books that had been read aloud to them than to read other books. Mason and Blanton concluded that exposure to a good story increased a child's desire to read it on his/her own.

Thompson, Mark E. "What Happens When Readers Do Not Read?" The Problem of Reluctant Readers." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the North Central Reading Association, (30th, Notre Dame, IN, 1987, ERIC) ED 286 165.

Reluctant readers were frequently identified as unmotivated readers in their early school years. Thompson recommended strategies to apply early in a child's reading development to interest him in reading, which included reading aloud. He discussed the problem of Americans placing little value in the habit of reading. He noted George Steiner's theory that power in the United States will ultimately belong to the alliterate. He concluded that acquiring a value for reading was as important a factor in the futherance of literacy as was teaching illiterate adults basic reading skills.

Matthews, Charles E. "Lap Reading for Teenagers." Journal of Reading 30 (1987): 410-413.

Matthews observed the rapt attention of teenagers while being read a good story and concluded that an encounter with a good book was one of the best ways to introduce good literature to teenagers. He suggested that a book could compete with television and sports if the right book were selected and presented with the right atmosphere and preparation. He determined that teenagers of today needed to see the teacher's enthusiasm and excitement and emotions a good book could offer. He concluded that since many teenagers were not reading for themselves, reading aloud was a way to introduce the joys of literature.

Frick, Hollee A. "The Value of Sharing Stories Orally with Middle Grade Students." Journal of Reading 29 (1986): 300-303.

Although reading aloud to her class was "sheer joy" to this author, Frick said that some educators needed to be convinced of its academic value. She listed that the most obvious skill learned was listening since the story must be comprehended aurally. Also, students developed a better vocabulary as they heard words that they would not recognize on sight, but were able to comprehend through the use of context clues. Students learned to recognize story grammars as they became aware of plot and character. Often more advanced sentence structures were part of the experience gained in reading aloud. However, the author stated that the most important reason for reading aloud was motivation. If reading aloud was done well as a positive activity, the joy of reading was conveyed to the student. Since reading aloud was a shared experience, a spirit of togetherness between students and between students and teacher developed. Frick concluded with the idea that reading aloud was a valuable teaching tool that students of all abilities could enjoy and it was "an absolutely pleasurable and relaxing experience for all" (303).

Brissey, Lisa. "Observing and Recording Children's Responses to Literaure Read Aloud." North Dakota University, Grand Forks. Center for Teaching and Learning. ERIC (1982) ED 219 767.

Brissey's research involved tape recording the responses of first grade students as she read to them. She also kept a notebook with a checklist of nonverbal behaviors and comments. The books were read and reread to the children in small groups over a four-month period. An analysis of the tapes revealed forty categories that seemed to describe the range of responses that were exhibited. These categories were organized under the broad headings: response to text, response to story structure, and specifically directed communication. The author found that as a result of her study, her belief in the power and importance of re-reading books was strengthened. For the many books that were worthwhile, repeated readings "provide a powerful stimulus for language development, comprehension of story structure, identification with characters, gaining insight into themes of literature, and creative expression related to a story" (8).

Miles, David R. "Smooth and Crumply: Children's Meaning Making with Story." Language Arts 62 (1985): 343-348.

Miles conducted this project to determine how children made sense and meaning from stories that were read aloud to them. The project included a first, second, third, and fifth grade. The important factor of this study was to allow time for the children to get to know the story by listening to the story read aloud three different times without showing the pictures and with one day intervals between readings. This allowed the story to work on their imaginations, emotions, and thinking processes. After the second reading, the children had an open-ended discussion of the story. The author contended that making meaning "refers to making sense from the story on a deep and personal level" which the children were able to do. The author's conclusions seemed to be subjective as the children's responses were analyzed. However, the less stereotyped student responses pointed to some validity in giving time for a story to have a personal meaning and to become part of the child.

Berg-Cross, Linda and Gary Berg-Cross. "Listening to Stories May Change Children's Social Attitudes." The Reading Teacher 31 (1978): 659-663.

The purpose of this study was to discover whether merely listening to stories that expressed values would result in a change in children's attitudes. The group tested were one hundred twenty, four to six year olds attending kindergarten or nursery school. The children were randomly assigned to one of five experimental or control groups. The children in the experimental groups were read stories for their expression of social values concerning friendship, death, risk-taking, and sex role stereotyping. The control groups were read a story that did not contain the social value of the experimental stories. The change in attitude as determined by a pre and posttest was quite large. Across all the stories, the experimental group subjects changed well over half of their answers from pre to posttesting. The researchers concluded that the expressed values of four to six year old children could be changed by listening to stories espousing different values. Therefore, parents and teachers should take very seriously the books they introduce to their children.

O'Bryan-Garland, Sharon and Stinson E. Worley. "Reading Through Laughter and Tears." Childhood Education 63.1 (1986): 16-23.

There is a need to develop healthy emotions and a book is a prime source for learning to respond to humor or sadness. This thesis led the authors to study fifth graders' reactions to books on humor and sadness. The authors surveyed five hundred thirty-one fifth graders to determine which humorous and sad books they were interested in reading. The students themselves provided the book titles. The top ten sad and funny books were listed. Practical suggestions to promote reading that stimulated emotions were included. The recommendation relevant to this paper was to encourage excitement in reading by whetting students' appetites by reading to them excerpts from the top ten lists. "Reading aloud has not lost its charm for fifth graders" (21).

Sullivan, Joanna. "Read Aloud Sessions: Tackling Sensitive Issues through Literature." The Reading Teacher 40 (1987): 874-878.

This article dealt with ways to deal with children's common concerns in a group way while listening to and discussing good stories through read aloud sessions. Sullivan reported on a fourth grade classroom, noting the teacher's decisions and the students' responses. The purpose for this type of read aloud was not for entertainment, but to involve students to think through today's problems and to become more sensitive to those who are dealing with such problems. It was noted that this type of read aloud session was appropriate for all grade levels, although the themes would differ at different ages. The topics selected for discussion were divorce, problems with relationships, and overcoming handicaps, with the students choosing which books to read from a list for each topic.

Piller, Arlene M. "Using Children's Literature to Foster Moral Development." The Reading Teacher 33 (1979): 148-151.

The author recognized that teaching to develop moral judgment was open to question. However, moral conflicts in children's literature were genuine. "They present problems involving justice and human welfare, and concern conscience, truth, authority, and the sanctity of life" (150). Through higher level questions, teachers help pupils advance in reasoning and judgment, and focus on fostering empathy and mutual respect. This developed higher-stage reasoning.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS USING READING ALOUD

Anderson, Ora Sterling. "Read Aloud Tutoring: A Program to Enhance Reading Interests." Reading Horizons 25 (1984): 14-16.

This article described a volunteer tutorial program involving high school and parent volunteers who read aloud to and/or listened to third and fourth grade students. These students were performing at least six months below grade placement. They were read aloud to for forty-five minutes a day for one semester. A wide variety of books was used that had been categorized and annotated by reading specialists. Because of the variables in tutees, no formal assessment was made. But teachers and tutors reported evidence of more positive attitudes and higher interest in reading as a result of the program. This coincided with a study by Cohen and Kulik (1981) that tutorial programs contributed to the academic growth of the children who were tutored as well as a definite increase in their attitudes and knowledge.

Boothroy, Bonnie and Jean Donham. "Listening to Literature: An All-School Program." The Reading Teacher 34 (1981): 772-774.

This article described how a school developed a literature program that was school-wide and a basic part of the reading program. This program not only developed reading skills, but motivated children. It required cooperation between all staff members as planning and book selections took place. The children made the final book selection in order to increase their sense of involvement. The groups met for two twenty-five minute periods per week for a nine-week unit. Both teachers and students were affected positively. The teachers became more familiar with children's literature and they enjoyed the staff cooperation. The children gained by exposure to books and authors that they otherwise might never have read themselves. "The discussion questions, the emphasis on themes, and related activities differentiated this program from simply reading aloud to children" (774).

Galda, Lee. "Playing About a Story: Its Impact on Comprehension." The Reading Teacher 36 (1982): 52-55.

Galda reported the results of a study comparing drawing, discussion, and dramatic play as effective follow-up comprehension aids in the classroom. One hundred eight children in kindergarten, first, and second grades were randomly assigned to one of three conditions--drawing, discussion, or dramatic play. After hearing the story read aloud, each group did their post-story assignment. All of the children took a criterion referenced comprehension test of ten questions, and were asked to retell the story. The play group scored significantly higher than the drawing or discussion groups for remembering, understanding, solving, and analyzing questions on the test. The discussion group scored higher than the drawing group. In the retellings, the play group again recalled significantly more episodes and in sequential order than the discussion and drawing groups. The conclusion was drawn that the comprehension was greater because of the verbal response to the story by both play and discussion groups. The active involvement through play served to increase comprehension even more. The author suggested that teachers try play because it is fun, and helps children "become better and better readers" (55).

Hough, Ruth A., Joanne R. Nurss, and D. Scott Enright. "Story Reading with Limited English Speaking Children in the Regular Classroom." The Reading Teacher 39 (1986): 510-514.

The authors reported strategies for teaching Limited English Speaking (LES) children through stories read to them. They researched various studies that not only showed it to be productive, but also included some practical suggestions. Various studies have found that reading to the LES student helped them acquire language, figure out grammar, and make predictions. Reading aloud to LES children not only helped the child acquire the language, but also to read the language. Reading aloud helped the LES student get through the "silent period" while they watched and listened to the story. The authors recommended repeated exposure to meaningful language as one of the best ways to acquire a second language, with story reading being an ideal way. Through follow-up activities such as play and dramatization, children can practice verbal and non-verbal behaviors in a natural way. Other strategies pointed to story reading as an ideal way to teach LES students and monolingual children in the same classroom in a way that is fun for everyone.

Morrow, Lesley Mandel. "Retelling Stories: A Strategy for Improving Young Children's Comprehension, Concept of Story Structure, and Oral Language Complexity." The Elementary School Journal 85 (1985): 648-661.

Morrow theorized that asking young children to retell a story in their own words would improve their concept of story structure and comprehension. A survey showed that teachers rarely gave children a chance to retell the story as it was considered too time-consuming for the educational benefit. To test her theory, she studied eighty-two kindergarteners. The children in the experimental group practiced retelling stories with guidance when needed. Children in the control group were asked to draw a picture about the stories. Comprehension tests were given after each story. This was done for eight stories. By the final test, the control group improved 9.3 percent while the experimental group improved 27.6 percent. The experimental group outperformed the control group in discussing the setting, theme, plot, sequence, and language used. The conclusion can be drawn that this very simple instructional activity can have positive educational benefits for young children and perhaps older children as well.

Martinez, Miriam and Nancy Roser. "Read It Again: The Value of Repeated Readings During Storytime." The Reading Teacher 38 (1985): 782-786.

Children love repetition, yet a storybook is rarely repeated. This statement led the authors to investigate whether repeated readings had any value. They observed children's responses to literature as the children became increasingly familiar with the story. They selected five expository pieces of literature that were unfamiliar to the children and audiotaped the storytime in both a school and home setting to determine differences in children's responses as stories were repeated. They discovered at least four changes. 1) The children's talk changed from: 2) the children talked more as they became familiar with the story; 3) the children focused on different aspects of the story; 4) their responses showed greater depth of understanding as the story was read repeatedly (three times). Educators need to be aware that reading books aloud should not only be a priority, but that they should return to those books to increase their students' responses and "to fully appreciate books as familiar old friends" (786).

Amato, Anthony, Robert Emans, and Elsie Ziegler. "The Effectiveness of Creative Dramatics and Storytelling in a Library Setting." Journal of Educational Research 67 (1973) 162-163, 181.

The setting for this study was not the classroom, but the public library. Its purpose was to determine the relationship between story-telling, creative dramatics, and reading achievement. This two-year study involved two hundred ninety-eight elementary grade level students who visited the library each week for one and one half hours. There were three groups: one in creative dramatics, one in storytelling, and one in library usage only. Pre and posttests were used. Although the researchers could not report any statistically significant ($p<.05$) results in terms of achievement, they did observe that the experimental groups checked out more books and increased their library usage time than the control group ($p<.01$). Their attendance at the weekly session was also greater ($p<.01$).

[illegible] "[illegible] Evaluation." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 1983). ED 227 454.

This study focused on students who had the skills to read but who would not read for some reason or another. These reluctant readers were identified to participate in a community center "Listening Club" designed to motivate neighborhood children to read by reading aloud to them. A story was read to an exciting part, where the reader stopped, and copies of the book were distributed for the children to keep. The children were never told to finish the book, but many did, some even before going home. Through various rating scales by teachers, interviews, and staff, it was determined that the Listening Club did increase the children's reading skills and motivation.

RESOURCE BOOKS

Trelease, Jim. The Read-Aloud Handbook. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

The author's purpose for writing this book was to provide a simple how-to guide for parents, teachers, and librarians on reading aloud to children, with a substantial list of recommended titles included. The first part of the book dealt with the need to read aloud to children with adequate research documentation included. The author stated, "This is not a book on teaching your child how to read. Instead, it is book on teaching your child to want to read" (14).

Kimmell, Mary Margaret and Elizabeth Segel. For Reading Out Loud! A Guide to Sharing Books with Children. New York: Delacorte, 1983.

The purpose of this book was to show how to enrich children's lives and improve reading skills through "this inexpensive enjoyable activity" (12). The author explained why it is important to read aloud and how to find time in the home and classroom. Effective ways of reading were discussed. One hundred forty books were described as a guide on what to read.

Sutherland, Zena, Dianne L. Monson, and May Hill Arbuthnot. Children and Books. 6th ed. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1981.

Arbuthnot had long been an acknowledged expert in children's literature. She and her colleagues had written this resource book which is now in its sixth edition. It has long been recognized for its comprehensive study of all aspects of children's literature. Practical advice and suggestions to make the read aloud time a positive experience for all were included.

Huck, Charlotte. Children's Literature in the Elementary School. 3rd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979.

An expert in children's literature, Huck reviewed some research detailing the importance of reading aloud in the classroom. Many of those research articles have been reviewed in these annotations.

SUMMARY

Reading aloud to children in the classroom has long been a part of classroom activities, its value through the years being assumed without many actual research studies. However, there are now sufficient research studies that show it to be a valuable activity, not only in terms of instructional value, but also in developing positive reading attitudes.

Koeller stated that for over twenty-five years, research had shown that more literature should be used in the classroom in order to develop students with the lifelong habit of reading (362). Eldredge and Butterfield's research showed that a literature program produced better readers in comprehension and attitude (35-36). Russavage, Lorton, and Millham found that more teachers were supplementing their basal reading programs by incorporating literature for enrichment and variety, and to meet the students' needs (317).

In many studies, reading aloud to children on a regular basis had been shown to increase reading comprehension. Porter's research with inner city children, Feitelson's research in Israel, Fearn with fourth graders, Cohen with disadvantaged students, and many more studies resulted in higher comprehension scores following their various read aloud studies.

Bellon noted that children became "active users of language" (151) through the use of oral reading as they reacted to a story. Cullinan, Jaggar, and Strickland did their research with black children who were learning standard

English, Hooper and Hare's research enriched children's language by reading aloud about the circus. Fasick contrasted the language of television and storybooks, and found storybooks contributed much more to learning complex language structures. Chomsky studied the stages of language development and found that children learned language by exposure to it while listening to language read aloud.

Other studies determined that another advantage of reading aloud was that children could be exposed to language that was above their reading level, but was on their comprehension level. Using context clues, they could understand words that [illegible] "Children can understand, indeed need, [illegible] a reading level beyond their ability. A good book, well read, brings responses from children who could not enjoy and respond to the book on their own because their reading ability would not permit it" (Sutherland 528).

Reading aloud was found to be more effective with children in the lower socioeconomic status (Porter; Cohen; Feitelson et al.; Hooper and Hare). This was attributed in part to the contrast between the child's daily linguistic environment and the literature that was being read to them. Fearn and Cohen also noted that children at the lowest extremes of reading achievement showed the most growth in reading scores.

There was found to be a strong coorelation between home and school concerning reading success (Lockledge and Matheny; Morrow 1983). Regardless of the child's socio-economic status, the children that were read aloud to in the

home had higher achievement scores in all aspects of reading. Lifelong readers came from homes that valued reading. However, Lockledge and Matheny noted that there were readers that came from homes with very limited reading experiences. The fact that these readers loved to read invariably was due to a teacher that "got them to read" (1). Lockledge and Matheny suggested that reading aloud was one area where the school could influence a child (8).

In fact, teachers were found to be perhaps the most important influence in the development of children's responses to books (Perez 9). Perez suggested that in order to be an effective teacher of reading, the teacher must present reading as being an exciting and worthwhile activity (10). Searls stated that in order to teach reading effectively, the teachers must themselves value reading, and demonstrate this by their reading habits and attitudes (233).

When reading aloud, Lamme found three factors in the teacher's behavior to be the most important, and each of these factors had to do with getting the child involved in the reading (886-887). Roser and Martinez said that children were found to react to a story in the same way that the adult reading the story to them did. This pointed out the importance of the teacher's enthusiasm and involvement in the story (489). Gerth suggested that teachers should get the children involved by such techniques as leaving out a phrase, or asking what will happen next so that children will not become passive listeners that tune out the story (94).

Teachers in Morrow's study, after experiencing the success of their experimental literature program, discovered that there was time for reading aloud (1985: 336). Yet survey reports varied as to whether teachers were actually reading to their classes. Reports varied from forty percent (Trelease 25) to over ninety-six percent (Stahlschmidt and Johnson 148). Trelease (25) reported even fewer read to their students in the upper grades. Hall (430) reported less than half of the classes had a read aloud time daily, and even less (seventy-six percent) had a planned literature program. (The wide differences in the responses point to discreprancies between studies and the different ways the individual research was conducted.)

It has been found that children do like to be read to. They responded overwhelmingly in the affirmative when asked if they liked being read to (Mendoza 523; Mason and Blanton 793). Artley (27) and Bruckerhoff (105) discovered similar results in their surveys in which students responded to the question about what they remembered that got them interested in reading. Both surveys reported that a teacher reading aloud was the positive factor in reading that they remembered most.

Although reading aloud was most often assumed to be a preschool or primary activity, older students reported that they also liked being read to. Mendoza commented that just because children had advanced beyond the primary level, it should not be assumed that they prefered to read for themselves. She said that teachers should capitalize on this interest and read aloud to their children as much as possible (523).

Frick contended that regardless of oral reading's academic value, motivation was the most important factor for reading aloud. She felt that hearing a story read aloud made for a positive classroom activity that would result in a shared experience in the classroom (302). "Lap reading" was the term Matthews (410) used when recommending reading aloud to teenagers. This term referred to the intimate atmosphere that sharing a book can create. He said that many teenagers were not reading for themselves, but they would listen to a story that they would probably not read on their own, thus introducing them to literature they otherwise would probably miss.

Reading aloud affected children's social attitudes leading L. and G. Berg-Cross to point to the responsibility of choosing the right book for students in order to promote positive behaviors (663). Emotions such as laughter and tears were felt through literature (O'Bryan and Worley). Sullivan said that it was possible through book selections "to deal quietly with children's common concerns in a group way and at the same time give the children experience of listening to and discussing good stories" (874). Reading books that promote empathy and moral judgment was the subject of Pillar's thesis. Children needed time to "make meaning" of a story according to research by Miles. Time was needed for literature to work on children's emotions, thinking processes, and imaginations (Miles 356).

It was found that comprehension and enjoyment of literature were better when students became actively involved in the reading through various programs and activities. A good example of this was Galda's research where it was determined

that students comprehended a story better by dramatic play, or "playing about a story", plus they enjoyed the activity (55). Giving time for repeated readings was justified by the results of several studies (Martinez and Roser; Miles; Brissey). Another way of sharing books was through a tutoring program that brought evidence of positive growth in both cognitive and attitudinal areas (Anderson 16).

Reading orally to children was found to whet children's appetites for reading. After hearing a book read aloud, children wanted to read it, or one like it, for themselves. This characteristic of children contributed to the success of such neighborhood reading programs as reported by Howell, and school literature programs described by Boothroy and Donham.

Hough, Nurss, and Enright presented evidence that reading stories aloud to Limited English Speaking children was a natural device for helping these students to acquire language through repeated exposure to meaningful language. This was also helpful and fun for monolingual students, as well.

CONCLUSION

In all too many classrooms, reading is work--it is ditto sheets, workbooks, and tests. Rarely is reading done for pleasure. Children are practical. If they do not see the value of something, they will fail to learn it. Many students fail at attempting to make sense of the isolated bits and pieces of language, often called reading. Many children who are drilled on reading skills never learn to love to read and never read anything beyond what is required.

It is up to the teacher to provide experiences with real books and real stories that take the nonsense out of reading, and help children understand that reading is supposed to make sense and have meaning. Reading aloud provides the perfect opportunity for these experiences.

Research now provides evidence that reading aloud does have a definite educational effect on comprehension, attitude, language development, and the development of life-long reading interests. It is an activity that should have a place in the curriculum and should be scheduled regularly. McCormick sums it up so concisely:

> Hearing literature read is as important as any other element of the curriculum...In this age of accountability, time spent reading to children can be justified since the activity does promote measurable growth in achievement. At the same time, when children hear literature read, we are satisfying the goals of

educators who value the equally important aesthetic and subjective reasons for reading aloud to children." (McCormick 143)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers should evaluate their basal reading programs and be willing to supplement them with trade books.

2. Teachers should read aloud daily as a planned part of the curriculum.

3. Teachers should model reading in a positive manner.

4. Reading aloud should be practiced in all grades.

5. The classroom should be a place where sharing can take place through the common factor of a shared-book experience.

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II. Educational Background

A. North Central College, Naperville, Illinois
Degree: B. A., Elementary Education, 1960.

B. Master's Degree Candidate, Indiana University at South Bend.

III. Teaching Experience

A. Second-Grade Teacher, 3 years: 1960-1963;
Cross School, Brookfield, Illinois

B. First-Grade Teacher, 3 years: 1963-1966;
Milford Elementary School, Milford, IN
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C. Substitute Teacher, 3 years: 1975, 1986-1987
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D. Third-Grade Teacher, 1 semester: Jan.-May 1988
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